

An Examination on School Engagement and Metaphorical School Perception: Case of Province of Çankırı

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Abstract

In the present study, school engagement and metaphorical school perceptions of students were analyzed based on gender, school type and grade. The relationship between school engagement and school perception was also examined. 410 high school students from ten different schools participated in the study. The data were collected through the "Scale for School Engagement" and "Scale for School Perception". Data were analyzed with arithmetical mean, standard deviation, percentage, t-test, MANOVA and multivariate regression analysis techniques. Findings showed that participants' school engagement and positive school perception levels were in moderate level. Comparative analysis based on gender, school type and grade revealed significant differences in both variables. In addition, it was determined that metaphorical school perception predicted school engagement. Hence, it was concluded that improving positive school perception of students might increase their school engagement.

Key Words

School Engagement, Metaphor, School Perception, High School Students.

School effectiveness has been discussed for many years among scholars (e.g. Coleman, 1966; Friedenberg, 1965; Illich, 1971; Kozol, 1967; Silberman, 1971). Similarly, some researchers think that school effectiveness is also related with some other variables including school attendance, running away from school and bullying at school (Kimberly, 2006; Kuş & Karatekin, 2009; Mayer, Butterworth, Nafpaktitis, & Sulzer-Azaroff, 1983; Reid, 1983, 2005; Smith & Brain, 2000). Some negative aspects of school life including low academic level and school bullying among students can be related with some other variables such as

school engagement. Scientists have been examining school engagement for many years (Arastaman, 2009; Finn & Rock, 1997; Finn & Voelkl, 1993; Libbey, 2004). Various scholars mentioned that school engagement has three dimensions including behavioral, emotional and cognitive (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris 2004; Jimerson, Campos, & Greif, 2003). On the other hand school engagement resembles organizational commitment (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979, p. 311). Many researchers have examined school engagement related with many other variables, such as academic success (Conchas, 2001), leaving school (Janosz,

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Archambault, Morizot, & Pagani, 2008; Sinclair, Christenson, Evelo, & Hurley, 1998), self-efficacy (Caraway, Tucker, Reinke, & Hall, 2003). Likewise, teachers' supporting behaviors were also correlated with school engagement (Brewster & Bowen, 2004). Parental involvement was also reported as a predictor of school engagement (Simons-Morton & Crump, 2003; Woolley & Bowen, 2007). Shin, Daly, and Vera (2007) indicated that school engagement is related with peer support. Dotterer, McHale, and Crouter (2007) found positive correlation between school engagements and out-school activities such as homework. And lastly, Murray (2009) argued that the relationship between teacher and parent could increase students' engagement toward school. As it can be understood school engagement is related with many variables. However, it has not been questioned whether it is correlated with school perception of students. In fact, school perception is a very important variable in terms of academic achievement (Ford & Ill, 2008). School perception can be examined as a kind of attitudes. Robbins (2003, p. 19) defines attitudes as negative or positive judgments towards people and objects. Baron and Byrne (1987) examine attitudes as a social psychological entity. Students' school perception can be metaphoric and be examined as a kind of attitudes. For many years some researchers have articulated their view about metaphorical thinking (e.g. Duque & Johnson, 1999; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Morgan, 1998; Öztürk, 2007; Tsoukas, 1991). In addition many empirical studies have been conducted on metaphors in educational context (e.g. Balcı, 1999; Bredeson, 1985, 1988; Cerit, 2008; Çuhadar & Sarı, 2007; Dönmez, 2008; Ocak & Gündüz, 2006; Özdemir, 2012a; Saban, 2004a, 2004b, 2009; Saban, Koçbeker, & Saban, 2007).

Purpose

The main purpose of present study was to examine the relationship between school engagement and metaphorical school perception of high school students based on gender, school type and grade.

Method

Sampling

Present study was conducted on 410 high school students from ten different schools. Stratified sampling technique was used (Balcı, 2004). Most of the participants were women (53.4%), from Science High School (23.7%) and first grade students (25.4%).

Data Collection Tools

Two scales were used in the present study to collect data. Students' school engagement was measured with the 'Scale for School Engagement' which was developed by Arastaman (2006). Students' school perception was measured with the 'Scale for School Perception' which was developed by Özdemir (2012a).

Data Analysis

The data which was collected from 410 students were analyzed with descriptive statistical techniques including arithmetical mean, standard deviation and percentage. Comparative analyses were done with t-test and MANOVA. The effect of school perception on school engagement was analyzed with multiple regression analyses technique.

Results

The present study revealed that that participants' school engagement and positive school perception levels were in moderate level. Comparative analysis based on gender, school type and grade revealed significant differences in both variables. In addition, it was determined that metaphorical school perception predicted school engagement.

Discussion

The results of present study showed that participants' school engagement level is in a moderate level. This finding is similar with the previous studies (e. g. Arastaman, 2009; Brewster & Bowen, 2004; Çelik & Ceyhan, 2009; Libbey, 2004; Sünbül, 1996). In addition, it has been indicated that there is a gender differences in terms of school engagement among students. Analyses showed that women participants' engagement level was relatively and significantly higher than men. This finding is also consistent with the similar studies (e.g. Arastaman, 2009; Çelikkaleli, Gökçakan, & Çapri, 2005; Fullarton, 2002 as cited in Arastaman, 2009; Kuş & Karatekin, 2009; Özdemir, 2012b; Özdemir, Sezgin, Şirin, Karip, & Erkan, 2010; Zieman & Benson, 1981). It was also found that general high school students' and religious based high school students' engagement levels were relatively higher than the Science High School students. This finding is also similar with the previous ones (Doğanay & Sarı, 2006; Özdemir, 2012a). Analyses indicated that participants perceive moderately their school as if

it is a suppression place, is a protecting place and is like a home. However, this finding contradicted with the some other studies (Özdemir, 2012a). In that study, it was found that most of the participants perceived their school as if it is highly protective and improving place. Another interesting finding is that as the grade level is getting upper, students' positive perception on school gradually decreases. This is consistent with the previous studies (Eccles, Midgley, & Adler, 1984). The multivariate regression analyses indicated that school perception is a significant predictor of school engagement. Similar studies revealed that those whose engagement level is high are rarely leaving their schools (Janosz et al., 2008; Sinclair et al., 1998).

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